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ABSTRACT

This paper delineates some major federal efforts concerning reading, namely, the activities of the National Institute of Education (NIE), the role of the U.S. Office of Education (USOE), and implications of Title VII of the Education Amendments of 1974. The impact of these agencies and legislation on the community is also examined. NIE is designated to conduct basic research in reading and disseminate the results to educators and parents; USOE's Right to Read program focuses on the community; and the new Education Amentments of 1974 create a National Reading Improvement Program which will provide some federal money directly to state and local education agencies within the community. (TO)

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READING AND THE COMMUNITY: A VIEW OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S POSITION

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A paper presented at the International Invitational Reading Conference sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Reading Specialists Association, Billings, Montana, March, 1975.

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I would like to preface my remarks to you, this afternoon, by pointing out that my comments do not represent the view of the federal government with regard to reading and the community, but rather, represent my view of the federal government's position on this issue. I trust my remarks will be brief and to the point.

Educators, among other professional and nonprofessional groups, are quite cognizant of the current forces impinging on their everyday life styles. Primarily, I am talking about the present economic status of the United States and the prognosis for the future. This prognosis is reportedly bleak by some and promising by others; depending on what camp one enters. With regard to reading and federal fiscal support, I liken the situation to a "good-news, bad-news" joke. The good news is, "the situation may not get worse;" the bad news, "but it may not get better!" Whether the federal fiscal support situation will change and how it will change is dependent upon a variety of factors, which are complex and unpredictable; however, it is my opinion that we ought to press forward with optimism and plan accordingly.

The theme for this international invitational conference is quite appropriate, since we have researched reading in a variety of settings with a considerable variety of treatments and we seem to find a greater number of authors stressing the importance of the young child's immediate environment (i.e.),

the home, and later his expanded environment--the COMMUNITY. Perhaps a major question for focus is: How can we expand the knowledge base of the community with regard to reading and thus incorporate the community into the world of reading for each child? And a corollary question is: Where does the federal government fit into the search for answers to the question regarding the community and reading? I will not answer the latter question directly; however, I do hope to provide information which will assist in the development of a "picture" through which individuals may infer answers and directions for the future. For information, let us examine some legislation; activities and/or direction of the National Institute of Education (NIE); the role of the United States Office of Education; and finally, implications of Title VII of the newly enacted Education Amendments of 1974, signed into law by President Ford this past August. (P.L. 93-380, House Resolution 69).

National Institute of Education

The National Institute of Education created by legislative mandate and born on August 1, 1972, was commended "to seek to improve education ... in the United States."[1] Organizationally, NIE falls within the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (DHEW) and is directly linked to the Assistant Secretary for Education, Ms. Virginia Trotter. (see organizational chart Appendix A). The National Council on Educational Research, a policy-making body for NIE, approved five priority areas for NIE. These priorities are as follows:

1. Providing of essential skills to all citizens;
2. Improving productivity in the education system;
3. Understanding and improving the relationship of education and work;
4. Developing problem solving capability in education systems at the state and local level; and
5. Understanding and developing means of accomodating the diverse education needs and preferences of various groups and individual children.

Although the five priorities are interrelated, priority one is designated to provide children with basic skills -- reading, math, and social competencies. Initially, NIE focused on reading difficulties of persons of all ages and backgrounds. Of particular interest to the theme of this conference are the efforts of NIE to:

> Analyze the reading tasks actually encountered both in and out of school to determine criteria for the kinds and levels of reading skills that people really need to understand such public documents as driver's license applications. . . catalog and analyze reading materials available for the middle school years (to be developed for parents and teachers).[2]

Once these efforts are realized, the "community" will have a better data base from which to operate. In addition to grants to and contracts with state education agencies (SEA's) and local education agencies (LEA's), NIE provides much support for the regional educational laboratories such as the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) located in Portland, Oregon. The regional labs subcontract with other agencies for product development. An example of

this activity in reading may be seen by the products in individualized reading originating from the Learning Research and Development Center (LRDC) at the University of Pittsburgh, subcontracted through Research for Better Schools (RBS). For the future, we should also look for some of the results of NIE projects ". . . concerned with the effects of home environment on children and with the special problem of the bilingual or bidialectic child."[3]

If the National Institute of Education does not encounter major support-legislation difficulty in Congress, educators should be obtaining results from various projects funded by NIE. Hopefully, these projects will contribute needed information to assist the community in establishing reading programs.

The United States Office of Education

Within the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, the Office of Education (OE or USOE) is responsible to see that ". . . available federal funds are brought to bear on major problems."[4]

OE is concerned with the challenge of quality and effectiveness of American education. Right to Read is one of OE's programs addressing this challenge. As of the second week in February, the Right to Read budget of $12 million for FY 1976 was not recommended for rescission by President Ford. Since, a main focus of OE's Right to Read program is the problem of literacy in school and out of school, individual states and thus, individual communities can look to stimulation from the federal government in this area.

To date, the Right to Read program is planning nine school-based demonstration projects and approximately 55 community-based projects to serve out-of-school functional illiterates. Thus, through Right to Read efforts, the goal of elimination of functional illiteracy by 1980 may be fulfilled.

Title VII of the Education Amendments of 1974

The Education Amendments of 1974 (P.L. 93-380) formulated to extend and amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, also provide for a variety of new programs. One of these programs is the National Reading Improvement Program under Title VII of the new law.[5] (see attached summary by Titles). Although the objectives of the National Reading Improvement Program (NRIP) parallel the Right to Read Program, the fundamental difference is that NRIP will stimulate by direct fiscal support whereas Right to Read is a coordinating effort. What we should see with the new NRIP will be direct aid to SEA's, LEA's nonprofit child care institutions and others for reading improvement programs. Funds are authorized to develop reading academies for youth and adults. These academies could be conducted through SEA's or LEA's. Under the requirements, each State Educational Agency, desiring to apply, must establish an advisory council on reading with broad representation. For the future, local communities should watch the Federal Register for guidelines and regulations concerning the $128 million per year authorization.

Summary

The purpose of this paper was to delineate some major federal efforts concerning reading and examine their impact on the community. The NIE is designated to conduct basic research in reading and disseminate the results to educators and parents. The United States Office of Education's Right to Read Program has a focus on the community. Hopefully, the Right to Read effort will have an impact on sensitizing the community to the importance of reading. The new Education Amendments of 1974 create a National Reading Improvement Program which will provide some federal money directly to state and local education agencies within the community.

It is obvious, from examination of testimony before the Subcommittee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives, that there is concern for the reading problems existing in the United States. The "First R" does receive attention within the federal bureaucracy. Hopefully, the White House Conference on Education, scheduled for 1977, will provide favorable statements concerning the gains in attacking the reading area.

In terms of programs for the future, perhaps Dicken's comment is apt: "It is the best of times, it is the worst of times!"

Thank you for your time this afternoon.

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2. Ibid.

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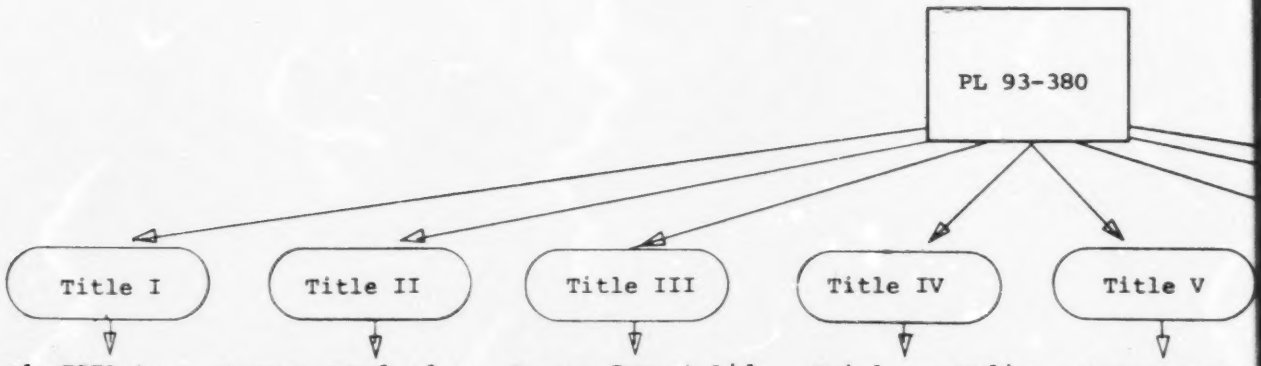
4. U. S. Congress, House, Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Department of Labor and Health, Education, and Welfare Appropriations. Right to Read Program of the Office of Education Hearing, 93rd Cong., 2nd Sess., April 8, 1974. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1974.

5. Education Amendments of 1974 Sec. 705, 88 Stat. 484 (1974), 20 U. S. C. Sec. 821 (1974).

THE EDUCATION AMENDMENTS OF 1974
Public Law 93-380

Summary by Titles*



Title I

- Extends ESEA to 1978
- Amends:
  a) Title I-educationally deprived children $1.68 billion
  b) Title VII-Bilingual Education

Title II

- Covers equal educational opportunity and transportation
- Contains provisions for busing

Title III

- Covers Impact Aid
- States may count Impact Aid funds as local resources under state equalization or foundation programs

Title IV

- Mainly consolidation of Title II ESEA, Title III of NDEA, and testing of Title III ESEA
- Old Cooperative Research Act falls under new Special Projects Act
- Also authorization for:
  a) metric system ($10 mill/yr)
  b) gifted & talented ($12.2 million)
  c) Community Sch. ($15 million)
  d) Career Ed. ($15 million)
  e) Consumer Ed. ($15 mill/yr)
  f) Women's Equity) ($30 million)
  g) Arts in Ed. ($750,000/yr)

Title V

- Covers opera of DHEW
- Creates Offi of Libraries Learning Re- sources in O
- Covers Family Rights & Pri Act (Buckley Amendment)
- Provides majo role for Nat' Center for Ed Statistics

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*Compiled from PL 93-380 GPO & American Education, Jan/Feb, 1975

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Public Law 93-380

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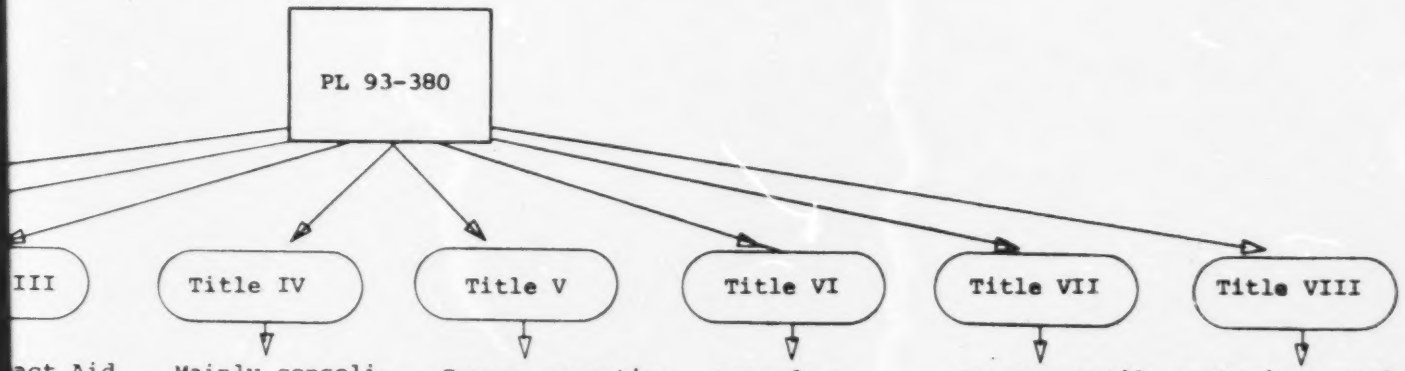

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- Covers operation of DHEW
- Creates Office of Libraries and Learning Resources in OE
- Covers Family Rights & Privacy Act (Buckley Amendment)
- Provides major role for Nat'l Center for Ed. Statistics

- Extends & revises Adult Ed. Act, Ed of the Handicapped, Indian Ed. Act, & Emergency School Aid Act
- Education of Handicapped tripled from FY74 $47.5 million to FY75 $630 million
- 200 additional grad. fellowships for Indian Students

- Creates Nat'l Reading Improvement Program $128 million per year
- Authorizes training courses and development of reading academies

- Authorizes study of ESEA, Title I
- Safe School Study
- Study of Athletic Injuries
- Bilingual Vocation Education
- Equalization of state funds for school districts
- Expands teacher corps to include preservice
- White House Conference on Education 1977

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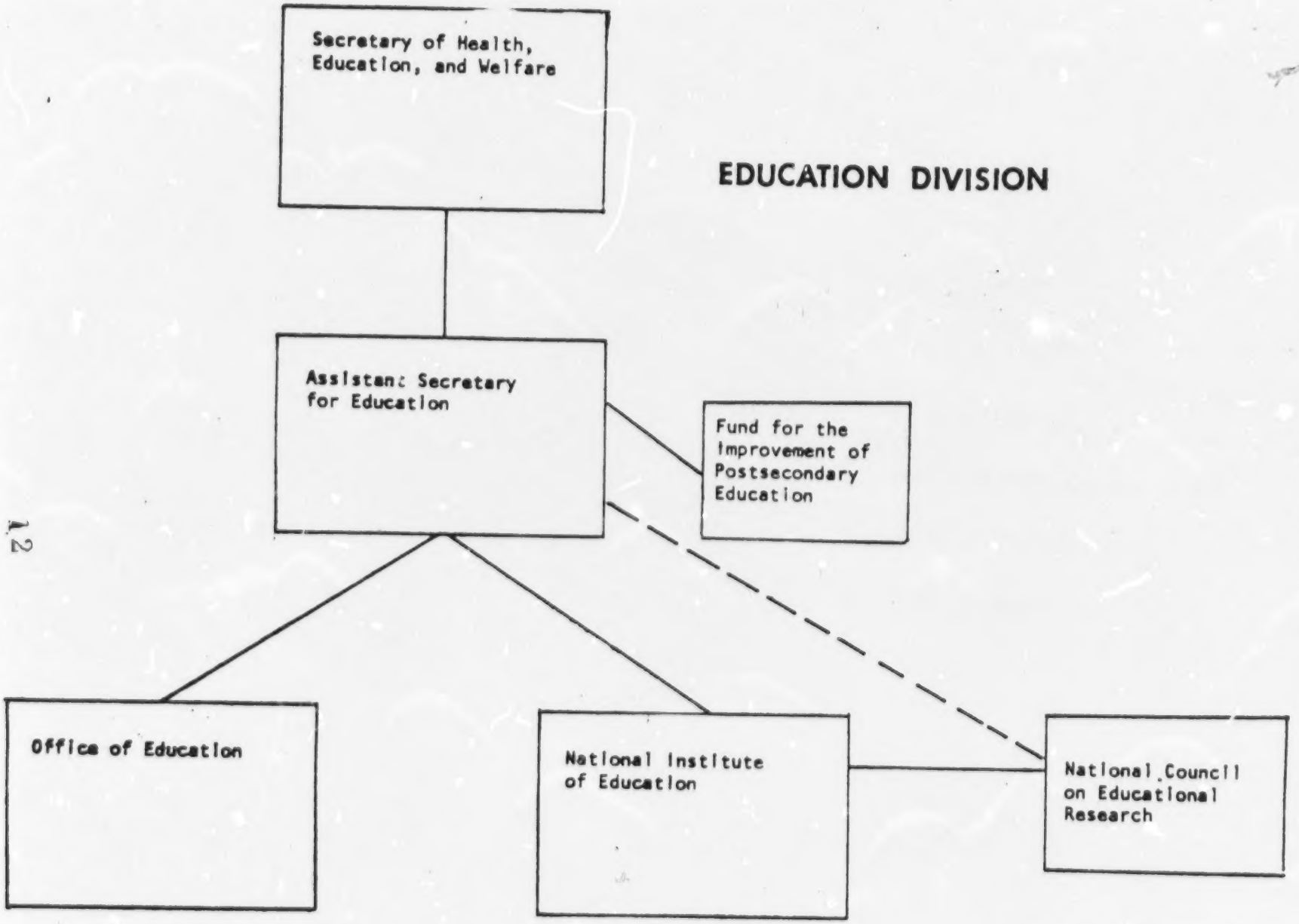
Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare
Assistant Secretary for Education
Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education
Office of Education
National Institute of Education
National Council on Educational Research

April 2, 1974